

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRINIDAD CITY COUNCIL**  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Miller called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Council members in attendance: West, Ladwig, Miller, Baker, Rotwein. City Staff in attendance: City Manager Berman, Records Clerk Cuthbertson.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Miller:** Propose budget be discussed, but decision delayed until all agenda items are discussed.  
*Motion (Rotwein/Baker) to approve the agenda as revised. Passed unanimously.*

**IV. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR:**

Dorothy Cox: The Fish Festival must have been a success because it took her 20 minutes to travel from her driveway to the freeway.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Resolution 2017-07 recognizing the first Trinidad Art & Music Festival in Trinidad, August 25-27, 2017.
2. Resolution 2017-08; LCP Update Grant Resolution of Submittal.
3. Sheriff Activity Report for May 2017.

*Motion (Rotwein/Baker) to approve the consent agenda as revised. Passed unanimously.*

**VI. DISCUSSION/ACTION AGENDA:**

1. Discussion/Decision FY2017-18 Budget and Resolution 2017-09 Adopting FY 2017-2018 Budget.  
City Manager Berman presented an overview of the proposed budget. Cash assets \$2.3 M. Current Public Works budget shows an overage of \$22K largely due to this winter's Lighthouse slide. Grant reimbursement and FEMA storm grants may reduce overage. Proposed General Fund Reserve transfers are Firehouse expenditures, Ocean Avenue encroachment, Stormwater loan reports. General Fund expenses are divided into four categories: Administration, Police, Fire and Public Works.

Berman also explained that the 2017-18 General Fund (GF) Revenue is estimated at \$626,000. He proposed a 2% COLA salary adjustment across the board that will cost approximately \$6,000. A one dollar raise for two public works plant operators represents a \$5,000 increase. Ryan has been upgraded to a "T3" operator, and Paul to "T2" operator. Health insurance will increase 10% in January 2018. Personnel costs budgeted at \$273,000.

The City donates 12% (almost \$17K) from TOT revenue to three local non-profits: Chamber of Commerce, Library and Museum. The Land Trust has requested to receive a donation in kind.

**Rotwein:** What causes the difference between budget and actual? We need to look at the causes of fluxuations. The decrease in sales tax is partially related to the fishing industry. Commercial and recreational fishing has declined. Regarding personnel increases; the majority of staff are at top of scale. The rate scale needs to be addressed; matrix needs to be redone. Salary increases should be based on merit and longevity rewarded. COLA increases are a bad idea. If an employee does a good job and receives a positive performance review, they should expect a merit raise. The two most important budget issues are safety and fiscal responsibility. Recommend council not approve budget if it includes COLA.

**Miller** agreed that the step increase matrix should be redone. City Manager will look into this issue.

**Baker:** The budget should not be tied in with COLA each year. Salary increases should be examined every year. Requested information on contract employees; are contacts renegotiated annually? Budgeting should look two to three years out.

**City Manager:** GHD and Planner charge at a fixed hourly rate. The city attorney and building inspector serve at will with small adjustments made over time.

*No decision was made. Item continued to the last item on the agenda...*

2. Discussion/Decision regarding Contract Renewal with Humboldt County Sheriff Contract

City Manager Berman explained that the Sheriff's contract is basically the same as last year. Requesting the Council's authorization to allow he and the Mayor to finalize contract, and adjust the deputy's schedule for specific events. Deputy Luke Mathieson has been very proactive. Having him called out on temporary assignments is an on-going problem, and during off-hours it continues to be an issue knowing if on-call deputies respond to Trinidad and how many hours they spend patrolling.

Public comment included:

**Jim Cuthbertson** - Trinidad

Sheriff's office assigns our deputy to other areas. He should be committed to the Trinidad area.

**Patty Fleschner** - Trinidad

The museum is so grateful to Luke for moving the transients out of the museum, library and park area.

**Dorothy Cox** - Trinidad

Who decides which days the deputy works? They should be trained and encouraged to enforce city codes.

Council comments included:

**Rotwein:** The council needs to talk with Lt. Miller regarding accountability and how they intend to enforce local ordinances. The city's attorney should review the new contract before it goes into effect.

**West:** I think we should invite Lt. Miller to attend a public meeting to discuss all our law enforcement issues.

**Ladwig:** An "accountability" clause should be added to the contract.

*Motion (Baker/Ladwig) to approve Sheriff's new contract with the addition of an "accountability" clause.*

**Passed unanimously**

3. Ocean Avenue Encroachments and Right of Way Recovery Project Bid Process and Award.

City Manager Berman explained that the 407 Ocean property curb inhibits right-of-way and should be removed to provide a parking area. 364 Ocean hosts an escallonia bush at least 20' high by 10'-15' wide which was planted years ago in the city right of way. It should be removed to facilitate traffic and add parking. Staff suggests we accept the low bid from GRS and pay the \$9K out of the Reserve Fund.

Public Comment included.

**Victoria Sackville-Rosen** - Trinidad

She is willing to cut back the hedge, but the hedge buffers her home a VDU and from neighbors and noise. She needs more time. She will cut back, but leave top for aesthetics.

**Dorothy Cox** – Trinidad

The hedge is a safety issue. We need the full width of the street to protect pedestrians, especially school children.

Council Comments included.

**West:** Concerned about using City money on private property. Is it fair to require a new owner (who didn't create the problem) to pay for repairs? (Vs) Is the original owner who planted the hedge in the City right of way responsible for correcting the problem? It is a narrow, well-traveled street, but we need more information before making a decision

**Rotwein:** We need to be consistent. Property owners need to be formally noticed (in writing) when there is any issue with their property. They should be notified before the next meeting.

City Manager will confer with city attorney regarding legality of charging new owners for previous infractions and long-time owners who caused current problem.

**Baker:** Proposed a line be painted in the center line of street to see if two RVs can safely pass. A traffic engineer should be consulted to determine how much space is needed from center line.

**Ladwig:** Does not feel comfortable using city funds to correct issues on private property.

**Miller:** This is a case of community values vs narrow street.

**Rotwein:** The street needs to be safe and parking is needed. The City has an ordinance re how tall shrubs and fences can be. As I see it, the City has three choices; 1) property owners take care of problem at their expense, 2) the owner and the City share the expense, or 3) funds come out of occupancy tax revenues, not general fund reserves.

**Baker:** The City must be consistent in terms of who pays. We can't allow rhodies to be saved on one side of the street. It is more cost effective to stage jobs; hiring a contractor to do all the work at one time. Victoria should be allowed time to speak to Dan and all council members before a decision is reached.

**City Manager:** The delay should not be an issue with the contractor, but there is pressure from residents to fix the problem before tourist season.

*Motion (Baker/Rotwein) to table issue until next meeting after reviewing the traffic engineer's report.*  
**Passed unanimously.**

4. Discussion/Decision: Firehouse Expansion Bid Process and Award

City Manager Berman explained that the annual expenses budgeted for FY2017-18 for the Fire Department is \$13,000, as well as a transfer of \$75K from Reserve fund for expansion. The expansion to the rear of the building is needed to allow the large pumper truck room to exit and enter the building without the threat of damaging the building. This project was approved for funding many years ago, but it has finally cleared the planning stages and is ready for construction, pending approval of the award to one of the 2 contractors that bid on the project.

**Tom Marquette,** Fire Chief: The "new" 1979 engine doesn't fit and future engines are larger. A 13' addition is needed, but the existing building will not be touched.

*There was no public comment.*

Council comments included:

**Rotwein:** This is a simple straight forward project with no need for engineering oversight (normally 10%)

*Motion (Rotwein/Baker) to move \$70K from Reserve fund to build firehouse expansion.* **Passed unanimously.**

5. Discussion/Decision regarding Trinidad Storm Water Management Improvement Project Financing

City Manager Berman explained that the City must come up with 10% in matching funds to qualify to receive the grant funds, and is pursuing a USDA loan for the match funding. The loan application, however, requires engineering and environmental reports to be completed as part of the application that will cost the city approximately \$56,000 to complete. There is potential for the loan becoming a grant, but staff is anxious to start the engineering reports because there will be no loan or grant without them being complete.

Public Comments included:

**Shirley Laos** – Trinidad Rancheria

Your project will affect the Rancheria property, so we should be kept in the loop.

Council comments included:

**Miller:** We need to define and adopt a reserve policy to show the amounts allocated to projects and funds so the USDA doesn't think the City is sitting on an excessive reserve.

**Rotwein:** Table this issue until our next meeting and after the Reserve policy is addressed.

*Motion (Ladwig/West) to approve \$56K to come out of Reserve to pay for engineering and environmental reports with the understanding that every effort will be made to recover the costs. **Passed unanimously.***

**Continued Discussion/Decision FY 2018 Budget & Resolution 2017-09: Adopting FY 2018 Budget**

City Manager Berman explained that at a future meeting the Council needs to determine how much money to keep in the Reserve fund. Cemetery should be okay for eight years. The Water Fund should have a net surplus this year of \$18K which will roll over to the Reserve fund. Grant projects are funded for \$700K. Staff seeks approval and adoption of the 2017-18 budget

Public Comment included:

**Dorothy Cox** – Trinidad

It is premature to approve COLA before knowing what the income will be. The budget should be looking ahead three years.

**Jim Cuthbertson** – Trinidad

The City should pay merit increases based on performance.

Council comments included:

**Rotwein:** The first budget meeting was not productive. It left council with more questions than answers. This is a poorly structured budget. Better budget assumptions are required. Budget approval should be tabled until the July meeting.

**Baker:** What do we expect of a new, revised budget?

**Ladwig:** A revised budget should include a new personnel salary matrix and a 2 to 3 year projection overall.

**Miller:** Can we approve the budget; then work on specifics?

City Manager Berman explained that the Council could go forward with the budget as-is with the exception of no additional funds for personnel.

*Motion (Rotwein/West) to table budget approval to a future meeting. **Passed 4-1. (No-Miller)***

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting ended at 7:30 pm.

**Submitted by:**

**Approved by:**

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**Gabriel Adams**  
City Clerk

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**Dwight Miller**  
Mayor